

ON THE NOMENCLATURE OF
SALIX BEBBIANA SARG.

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Youngberg has recently proposed to treat *Salix bebbiana* Sarg. as a subspecies of the Eurasian *S. starkeana* Willd., under the name *S. starkeana* subsp. *bebbiana* (Sarg.) Youngberg, *Rhodora* 72: 549. 1970. This name is illegitimate and must be rejected under the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature.

As Youngberg notes, the name *S. bebbiana* Sarg. was based on *S. rostrata* Richardson, *App. Frankl. Journ.* 753. 1823, a later homonym of *S. rostrata* Thuill. 1799. Some other nomenclatural synonyms of *S. rostrata* Richardson which need consideration here are:

S. vagans subsp. *rostrata* Anderss. *Svenska Vet.-Akad. Handl.* 6: 87. 1867.

S. depressa subsp. *rostrata* Hiitonen, *Memoranda Soc. Fauna Fl. Fenn.* 25: 82. 1950.

The Andersson name was published as a binomial subspecies, a form which would seem on its face to be illegitimate, but which is effectively legitimized by a statement in the examples under Article 24 of the current (1966) edition of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature. Article 60 of the Code provides that "When the rank of a genus or infrageneric taxon is changed, the correct name or epithet is the earliest legitimate one available in the new rank. In no case does a name or epithet have priority outside its own rank." Article 66 further provides that "An epithet originally published as part of an illegitimate name may be adopted later for the same taxon in another combination", and this provision is elaborated on in Article 72. Thus the fact that Richardson's name *S. rostrata* is illegitimate has no bearing on the choice of a subspecific epithet. In subspecific rank the epithet *rostrata* carries priority from 1867. Hiitonen himself pointed out that he adopted the subspecific epithet *rostrata* because its prior use by Andersson

foreclosed the possibility of using the epithet *bebbiana* in that rank.

It is therefore clear that Youngberg's name falls afoul of Article 60 (previously quoted) and of Article 67, which states "A specific or infra-specific epithet is illegitimate and must be rejected . . . if its author did not adopt the earliest legitimate epithet available for the taxon with its particular circumscription, position, and rank". We may note again that the several names here discussed, aside from *S. rostrata* Thuill., are all nomenclatural synonyms, with *S. rostrata* Richardson as the basionym.

If the plant now generally known as *Salix bebbiana* Sarg. is to be treated as a subspecies of *S. starkeana*, it must take the subspecific epithet *rostrata*. I deliberately avoid the formal new combination, and I express no opinion here as to the proper taxonomic status of the group.

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